

Message Text

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70-62

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JA, UR

SUBJ: SOVIET- JAPANESE RELATIONS

REF: TOKYO 2616 AND 2617

1. SUMMARY: JAPANESE POL COUNS CHIBA EXPANDED SOMEWHAT ON REFTEL REPORTS OF MEETING BETWEEN BREZHNEV AND JAPANESE AMBASSADOR DURING MARCH 12 BRIEFING FOR POL CONS. HIS DESCRIPTION OF MEETING AND ANALYSIS OF PRESENT SITUATION FURTHER EXPLAINS WHY SOVIET COMMENTARIES ARE SUDDENLY SO OPTIMISTIC ABOUT OUTLOOK FOR IMPROVEMENT IN SOVIET- JAPANESE RELATIONS. CHIBA PROVIDED SOME ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE OF BREZHNEV' S PERSONAL SATISFACTION WITH TANAKA LETTER; SPECULATED THAT TANAKA MAY VISIT USSR BEFORE THE PROPOSED AUTUMN VISIT BY FONMIN; AND ASSERTED THAT, WHILE THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE IN JAPANESE POSITION ON NORTHERN TERRITORIES, TOKYO PREFERS TO WAIT TO MAKE THIS POINT CLEAR WITHOUT INVITING NEW CONFRONTATION. CHIBA ASKED THAT FACT OF HIS PASSING INFORMATION ON BREZHNEV MEETING BE HELD TIGHTLY, PARTICULARLY FROM JAPANESE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. END SUMMARY.

2. CHIBA SAID EMBASSY HAD BEEN ON VERGE OF SENDING ITS OWN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW APPROACH TO SOVIETS WHEN IT RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS FROM TOKYO. HE CLAIMED THAT JAPANESE LEADERS HAD BEEN SO PREOCCUPIED LAST YEAR WITH DOMESTIC AFFAIRS AND APPROACH TO CHINA THAT THEY HAD NOT THOUGHT THROUGH THEIR POLICY TOWARD USSR. HE DREW ATTENTION TO
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MANNER IN WHICH TANAKA IN HIS LETTER CITED SOVIET STATEMENTS ABOUT POLICY TOWARD JAPAN TO BUTTRESS HIS ARGUEMNTS.

3. ON QUESTION OF NORTHERN TERRITORIES, CHIBA NOTED THAT HALLORAN STORY FROM TOKYO IN MARCH 8 HERALD TRIBUNE INDICATING THAT JAPAN HAS SOFTENED ITS POSITION WAS INACCURATE. HE EXPLAINED THAT HALLORAN HAD DRAWN WRONG CONCLUSION FROM OMISSIONS IN BRIEFING BY FOREIGN OFFICE PRESS CHIEF. WHILE THERE WAS NO SPECIFIC MENTION OF NORTHERN TERRITORIES IN TALK WITH BREZHNEV, TANAKA INTENDED CITATION IN HIS LETTER OF BREZHNEV'S REMARK ABOUT "RESOLVING PENDING ISSUES REMAINING SINCE WWII," TO REFER TO THE ISLANDS. IN ORDER NOT TO DAMAGE IMPROVED TONE OF SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS, TOKYO DOES NOT INTEND TO ISSUE CORRECTION BUT IT WILL WAIT FOR APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY TO INDICATE TO SOVIETS THAT JAPAN WILL EXPECT TO RESOLVE NORTHERN TERRITORIES QUESTION IN CONNECTION WITH ANY PEACE TREATY.

4. IN HIS REFERENCES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SIBERIA AND CREDITS, TANAKA WAS RESPONDING TO A SPECIFIC REQUEST FROM THE SOVIETS FOR FORMAL ASSURANCE THAT THE JAPANESE SIDE WAS PREPARED TO MOVE ON THIS QUESTION. JAPANESE TECHNICAL TEAM THAT CAME EARLIER THIS YEAR TO LOOK INTO TYUMEN OIL QUESTION HAD RETURNED WITH THE RECOMMENDATION THAT SUCH AN ASSURANCE BE GIVEN. TEAM ALSO MADE CLEAR TO THE SOVIETS, HOWEVER, THAT THE JAPANESE SIDE STILL NEEDS MORE DETAILS ON THE PROJECT IF IT IS TO MOVE AHEAD. JAPANESE HOPE THAT BREZHNEV'S REMARK THAT THE EXPERTS SHOULD HAMMER OUT THE DETAILS MEANS THAT SOVIETS WILL FINALLY BE FORTHCOMING. ASKED WHETHER TANAKA'S REMARKS IN HIS TALKS WERE INTENDED TO EMBRACE ALL SIBERIAN PROJECTS, CHIBA SAID YES, BUT IN PRACTICE THE ONLY AREA WHERE THE JAPANESE ARE CERTAIN THERE ARE ENOUGH RESERVES TO MAKE EXPLOITATION INTERESTING TO JAPANESE AND AMERICAN COMPANIES IS TYUMEN.

(JAPANESE REPRESENTATIVE AT WESTERN ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL COUNSELORS' LUNCH MARCH 14 MADE THIS SAME POINT AND SAID HIS GOVERNMENT IS CONTEMPLATING PROVIDING LOAN GUARANTEES FOR TYUMEN ON THE ORDER OF ONE MILLION DOLLARS. DELEGATION OF JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN WILL PURSUE DISCUSSION OF PROJECT HERE IN APRIL.) CHIBA ASSUMED THAT THE JAPANESE SIDE WOULD SHORTLY BE CONTACTING INTERESTED AMERICAN COMPANIES.

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5. INFORMED CONCERNED SOVIET LECTURER'S PREDICTION OF TANAKA VISIT (MOSCOW 2656), CHIBA SAID HE HAD PERSONALLY NO INFORMATION BUT WOULD NOT BE TOO SURPRISED. SHOULD VISIT OCCUR, HE THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD TAKE PLACE SOME TIME AFTER THE DIET SESSION WHICH ENDS IN JUNE. HE INDICATED HE THOUGHT THAT TANAKA WOULD VISIT USSR BEFORE FOMIN COMES TO DISCUSS PEACE TREATY, WHICH HE ANTICIPATED WOULD BE IN THE FALL. CHIBA EVIDENTLY HAD SOME RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE TIMING OF THE VISITS SINCE HE NOTED THAT IF IT BECOMES

EVIDENT FROM TANAKA VISIT THAT SOVIETS ARE UNPREPARED TO MAKE ANY CONCESSIONS ON NORTHERN TERRITORIES, THERE WILL BE LITTLE POINT IN FONMIN COMING TO DISCUSS PEACE TREATY.

6. ON MECHANICS OF ARRANGING MEETING WITH BREZHNEV, CHIBA OUTLINED FOLLOWING SCENARIO. ABOUT FORTNIGHT BEFORE MEETING, JAPANESE INFORMED MFA THAT LETTER FROM TANAKA TO BREZHNEV WOULD BE COMING. POLITICAL DESK OFFICER ARAI (PHONETIC) ARRIVED IN MOSCOW MARCH 5 WITH LETTER, BUT WAS RECALLED MARCH 5 MOST URGENTLY TO TOKYO ON BUSINESS. WHEN CHIBA VISITED MFA

MARCH 5, HE WAS ASKED ABOUT ATMOSPHERE IN TOKYO AND PLEADED SOVIETS BY TELLING THEM THAT HIS GOVERNMENT FELT TIME HAD COME TO TAKE SOME INITIATIVE. TUESDAY MORNING HE WAS ASKED TO PROVIDE BRIEF SUMMARY OF MESSAGE, WHICH ALSO PLEADED MFA. BREZHNEV MEETING WAS TWICE POSTPONED FROM SIX TO SIX-THIRTY AND THEN TO SEVEN P. M. PRESENT AT MEETING WERE SECOND FE DIVISION CHIEF SPEDKO AND COUNS N. N. SOLOVYEV, WHO ACTED AS INTERPRETER. MEETING LASTED ABOUT TWO AND ONE-HALF HOURS, INCLUDING FIRST THIRTY MINUTES WHICH AMBASSADOR SPENT CHATTING IN RUSSIAN WITH BREZHNEV ABOUT, E., G., BREZHNEV'S IMPRESSIVE COLLECTION OF WATCHES, GIFT OF 24 CHOPSTICKS GIVEN HIM BY CHU TEH, ETC.

7. BREZHNEV WAS VISIBLY DELIGHTED BY LETTER. CHIBA SPECULATED THAT BREZHNEV FELT THAT TANAKA'S LETTER HELPED HIM PERSONALLY WITHIN SOVIET LEADERSHIP. NOT ONLY DID HE EXPRESS GENERAL APPROVAL OF ITS CONTENTS, BUT HE READ ALOUD SECTION (OF COURTESY RUSSIAN- LANGUAGE TEXT) MINIMIZING DANGER OF " MILITARISM" AND " REVANCHISM," COMMENTING THAT IT REFLECTED HIS EVALUATION ALSO OF JAPAN. HE ALSO READ ALOUD APPROVINGLY REFERENCE TO GRANTING OF CREDIT. DURING VIRTU-
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ALLY ONE HOUR AND FORTY- FIVE MINUTES MONOLOGUE, BREZHNEV SPOKE GENERALLY OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY BUT MADE ONLY PASSING REFERENCE TO ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY PROPOSAL.

8. ASKED WHAT IMPACT WOULD BE ON CHINESE OF TANAKA LETTER, CHIBA SIMPLY SAID, " THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION." HE REPORTED THAT, FROM ALL ACCOUNTS, CHINESE ARE CONCERNED OVER JAPANESE PLANS TO DEVELOP SIBERIA BUT CAN DO NOTHING ABOUT IT. WHILE JAPANESE TOLD ONLY U. S. AHEAD OF TIME ABOUT TANAKA LETTER, CHIBA ASSUMED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAS SUBSEQUENTLY INFORMED CHINESE.
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